United Nations A/CONF.224/5

General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 March 2015

Original: English

Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
Sendai, Japan, 14-18 March 2015
Agenda item 11
Adoption of the final outcomes of the Conference

Statement in explanation of position by the representative of the United States of America on the outcome document of the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction*

We would like to express our deep gratitude to the Government of Japan for hosting this conference and wish to thank them for their leadership in the global effort to address disaster risk reduction. We would also note that we have been both heartened and impressed by the innovation and dedication shown by the participants convened here in Sendai.

The United States of America has been a strong supporter of the Hyogo Framework for Action to reduce loss of lives and social and economic impacts of disasters, including through assistance. For example, the United States Agency for International Development alone has provided nearly $1.2 billion to support disaster risk reduction in 91 countries over the past decade.

As we consider the Sendai Framework, we underscore the core principle of disaster risk reduction, that each State has the primary responsibility for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk, including for the protection of people on its territory, infrastructure and other national assets.

Given the urgency of addressing disaster risk challenges faced by all nations, we remain deeply concerned about those elements in the current framework that distract from our collective efforts to address this crucial issue. We are therefore compelled to make the following statement:

We understand the "right to development" does not have an agreed international meaning and that work is needed to make it consistent with human

* The statement was delivered at the second meeting of the Main Committee of the Conference on 18 March 2015.

rights, which the international community recognizes as universal rights held and enjoyed by individuals, and which every individual may demand from his or her own government.

In addition, the United States explicitly dissociates from consensus on the following issues:

Concerning the transfer of technology, the United States supports a broad range of initiatives and mechanisms that provide technical assistance, including through the transfer of technology, to developing countries. However, we maintain that the transfer of technology must not be coerced and that the rights of private holders of intellectual property must not be abrogated, and we reject any suggestion that the present framework changes the obligations of countries under national law and relevant international agreements. We do not agree that the language on technology transfer in this framework can serve as a precedent for future negotiated documents, including any documents relating to the sustainable development goals or the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or any other negotiation in or outside of the United Nations system.

In considering international cooperation, the United States is pleased to see the cooperative nature of the outcome and interprets "international cooperation" to include cooperation between all countries, including between developing countries, and from a variety of public and private sources. The United States will continue to prioritize aid and assistance to those countries in need of such assistance, in order to complement their national efforts to address disaster risk reduction. However, the United States does not accept any interpretation of the present framework that would mandate quantitative targets for country-specific aid or other assistance or create new obligations to provide assistance in support of climate finance or for any other purpose, or that would otherwise prejudge or prejudice ongoing negotiations in other forums, such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Finally, we do not accept any reference to the coordination of international bodies that fails to acknowledge their respective authorities and competencies, and we dissociate from any reference to processes or relationships that disenfranchise the private sector, a vital partner in our endeavours.

Despite these reservations, we wish to emphasize that we are committed to working with partners at all levels to strengthen the capacity of individuals, communities, households and countries to enhance early warning, improve preparedness and mitigate the impacts of disasters.